DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 119 213 CS 202 544

AUTHOR Hipple, Theodore W.; And Others
TITLE The Novels Adolescents Are Reading.
INSTITUTION Florida Educational Research and Development Council, Gainesville.
PUB DATE 75
NOTE 56p.
JOURNAL CIT Research Bulletin; v10 n1 Entire Issue Fall 1975

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescent Literature; Educational Research; English Instruction; Fiction; Language Arts; *Literature Appreciation; National Surveys; *Novels; Reading Habits; *Reading Interests; Reading Materials; Secondary Education; *Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

This monograph reports the results of a national study conducted to determine the names of the novels students are most commonly required to read in their high school English courses and the names of their favorite novels, and to recommend methods for teaching novels. The sample for the survey was drawn from the membership of the Conference of Secondary School English Department Chairmen (CSSEDC), an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. The research instrument used was a questionnaire. An extensive narrative summary of results is provided along with a brief bibliography of books and articles about the teaching of novels. (RB)

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ED119213

Published by

THE FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Fall, 1975

Volume 10 Number 1

Published Quarterly

Annual Subscription ---------- $6.00
Individual Copies ---------- 2.00
10% discount for 4 or more. Orders of 4 or less must be prepaid. This is a Research Bulletin prepared for the Florida Educational Research and Development Council, 126 Bldg. E, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

CS 203 544

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Part I:

Name _____

State in which school is located _____

Name of School _____ Size _____

School Organization by grade (check one): ___6-8; ___6-9;

___7-9; ___9-12; ___other

Is an elective program in English operative in your school? ___

Number of years students are required to take English _____

Part II:

Please list up to ten commonly taught novels in your school.	Please list up to ten novels that are student favorites in your school.
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____

Thank you for your assistance. Please return this form to: Dr. W. F. Breivogel, Executive Secretary, FERDC, 126 Building E, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

FOREWORD

As one reads the daily newspapers in Florida (October, 1975) it appears that some of the lay public are taking a great deal of interest in what literature is being taught to students in our public schools. When the survey reported in this Bulletin was done by Drs. Hipple and Wright (November, 1973) the only purpose was to share with public school teachers of English the "names of novels students are most commonly required to read in their high school English courses and the names of novels these high school students select as their own favorites, as reported by their English teachers." We feel that the results of this national study may be of special interest in the context of today's discussions.

We have included in the front of this Bulletin a modification of the survey form which was used by Drs. Hipple and Wright in November, 1973. You might be interested in completing it before you read the Bulletin to compare what your school requires and what your students select as favorite novels. However, the availability of inexpensive editions (paperback) of popular novels and the passage of time may very well indicate changes have taken place in the favorite novels reported in the student section of this survey. We are attempting to determine what the students' favorite novels are in 1975. Will you help us? We plan to publish a follow-up report if we get enough responses.

FERDC would like to compliment Drs. Hipple and Wright on the excellent work they have done in this Bulletin.

W. F. Breivogel, Ed. D.
Executive Secretary, FERDC
November, 1975

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PREFACE

The purposes of this monograph are two-fold. The first is to share with teachers of English and others who are interested in the teaching of English the results of a national study we conducted to determine the names of the novels students are most commonly required to read in their high school English courses and the names of the novels these high school students select as their own favorites, as reported by their English teachers. The second is to discuss some methods for teaching novels in general and the novels identified in our survey in particular. It is our hope that this monograph will serve to inform the judgments of teachers of English about their teaching of novels, both those they require their students to read and those their students read on their own.

The organization of the monograph reflects these purposes and this hope. Chapter I provides a narrative of the methodology of our survey and a report of these results. Chapter II is an analysis of these results of the survey. Chapter III offers some summary information about teaching novels. Appendix A provides a brief bibliography of books and articles about the teaching of novels.

For help with this project we are indebted to people too numerous to mention here, but it is important that we indicate our appreciation to the 308 English department chairpersons who completed and returned our survey. Many of these people went to considerable lengths to provide as accurate a picture as possible of the state of novel reading in their schools; we thank them for their efforts. We should

also like to thank the members of one of our undergraduate English methods class who met one evening over beer and pretzels to help us with the tabulation. At the same time they saved us many hours of work, we also like to think they gained insights that will be beneficial to their own teaching. Finally, we want to express our appreciation to the Florida Educational Research and Development Council for their financial support of this undertaking.

CHAPTER I

THE RATIONALE, THE SURVEY, AND THE RESULTS

Few subjects taught in the nation's secondary schools have undergone such dramatic changes in the last decade as English. Time was, and not too long ago, that one could be fairly accurate in estimating what a secondary school student was studying in English class, no matter what kind of school he attended or where that school was located. Silas Marner was almost universally required. So also were Julius Caesar, Hamlet, and Macbeth. Few students escaped a chronological survey of American literature that ranged from the writings of John Cotton to those of John Steinbeck, usually in excerpted form. The tenets of traditional grammar reigned supreme in language study; indeed, in many schools traditional grammar study constituted almost the only attention paid to language. Composition was exposition and argumentation, often deriving from the literature being read and reflecting a "lit. crit." emphasis.

Then in the middle and late 60's came the development of the English elective program. English, as before, was still a required subject of virtually every student in high school (grades 9-12) for at least three years. But now it was, in large part, a different English, a broadened English that included courses on a variety of different aspects of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. Students elected courses, usually a semester in length, but not uncommonly only a nine-week mini-course. Some

electives owed a debt to the traditional English programs they were fast replacing: "Survey of British Literature," "Writing for the College-bound," "Good Grammar and Usage." Others reflected a borrowing from college offerings: "The Short Story as an Art Form," "Principles of Transformational Grammar," "Shakespearean Drama." But eventually other electives sprang up that represented a matching of teacher expertise and student interest that broke ground previously untilled in the fields of English teaching: "Media and You," "Science Fact, Fiction, and Fantasy," "For Communication's Sake." The English program had indeed changed.

Electives in English come and go, as the interests of teachers and students change. Few schools today offer the same elective program they offered even as recently as 1970. It does seem safe to predict, however, that, its internal changes notwithstanding, the elective program in English at the secondary school is here to stay. And, from a number of generalizations that may be drawn from this large transformation in the English curriculum, one looms particularly monumental to those English teachers interested in the teaching of literature: What students of today are reading, both required assignments and free choices, is vastly different from what they read a decade ago.

Concurrent with the changes in the high school English program came a marked shift in sophistication in the literature, novels especially, being written for and read by adolescents. In the so-called "teenage romance" novels of the 50's and 60's hand-holding and an occasional good-night embrace

represented the sexual limits to which authors could go. But not so in recent years. Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones is the story of a couple who "Had to get married." An abortion is one of the features of My Darling, My Hamburger. A decade ago protagonists in the fiction written for adolescents were almost always virtuous and, though beset by problems, almost always victorious. Again, not so today. The Pigman is a minor tragedy, a bitter lesson for its youthful protagonists. In Go Ask Alice (not really a novel, but rather an anonymous autobiography) the heroine struggles against a life of drugs and the worst aspects of the hippie culture. The Outsiders features gang warfare and a murder. In novels of recent yesteryear language was circumspect, seldom laced with anything stronger than an occasional "Heck!" or "Dang!" Today's use of "Damn" and "Hell" and even "Shit" more accurately capture the argot of today's teenagers.

(The one exception to these generalizations about the altered character of teenage fiction is Catcher in the Rye. Published in 1953, it was an early and controversial forerunner of today's literature in its treatment of sex, its abnormal protagonist, its dormitory-room language. That Catcher in the Rye was controversial, was seldom commonly taught until recently, was even banned in school and public libraries offers testimony to its being well out of the mainstream of adolescent literature of the 50's and 60's.)

These new novels were being well received. Libraries had to stock numerous copies. Teachers began being asked by students if books not on the approved lists could be used for book reports; when

these teachers inquired "What books?" they received answers like "Lisa, Bright and Dark" or "That Was Then, This Is Now" or "Bless the Beasts and Children." Students began talking among themselves about books, making books like Lord of the Flies or Siddhartha common favorites long before their entrance into the English curriculum. It became increasingly apparent that what adolescents were reading had changed.

A third noticeable trend has occurred in recent years that also suggests the altered reading habits of high school youth. The adult novel, the novel written for adults and seldom read by their sons or daughters, was no longer taboo, no longer kept on the top shelf or under the bed. Books like The Godfather or The Exorcist were now read openly by youths who, a generation earlier, would have had to smuggle such books home inside their civics texts to read under the covers with a flashlight. This trend should have been easily anticipated by simply examining the corollary changes on television and in the movies. Marcus Welby, and what could possibly be safer for children, was treating frigidity, offering advice on pre-marital sex. The Cannon-Kojak-Columbo group salted their language with frequent "damns" and "hells." Movies, even excepting the X-rated, everything goes variety, became much more explicit, and many of these movies were rated "PG," thus to be seen by many adolescents. What matter, then, the sex and violence of The Godfather?

These three indices of changed adolescent reading habits -- the altered English program, the substantively more sophisticated adolescent novel, and the widespread reading of adult novels by

adolescents -- led us to speculate on what high school youth were reading, both in English class and on their own. We were aware of these trends cited above, but we did not know their depth or breadth. Nor did we know how English departments had reacted to them. Was, for example, Silas Marner still the most commonly required novel, just as it had been in 1964? Were books like The Pigman or The Outsiders being read as part of English course requirements?

Our search for answers to these kinds of questions led us to the point many researchers come to: If a good answer isn't available, find out yourself. Hence, our survey to determine those novels most commonly required in the secondary schools and those most often identified as students' favorites.

The Survey Sample

We elected to sample the membership of the Conference of Secondary School English Department Chairmen, an affiliate of the National Council of Teachers of English. We could get their names and addresses and, so equipped, could send letters and survey forms to specific individuals. Too, because of their interest in furthering the cause of English teaching in this country, as attested by their membership in CSSEDC and NCTE, we felt that they would be likely to respond to our request. Thirdly, our using a randomly selected 50 percent of this national group would probably yield returns with the demographic coverage we hoped to achieve: returns from schools of different sizes, from schools in all

different parts of the country, from schools with varying nationalities and ethnic groups in the student bodies, from schools with varying percentages of college-going graduates.

Our one caveat about the use of a sample of CSSEDC teachers was that their heightened professionalism, as evidenced by their professional memberships, would be reflected in the superior programs at the schools in which they served as English department chairmen. In other words, we feared that an English program chaired by a CSSEDC member might be on the cutting edge of curricular revision in English and, thus, not be representative of the country as a whole. To check this concern we used a randomly selected group of English department chairmen in Iowa and another in Florida, a common characteristic of whom was that they were not members of CSSEDC.

Our letter and the accompanying survey form (figures 1 and 2) were sent out in December and January, 1973-74, to 416 CSSEDC members and 50 department chairmen in Iowa and Florida who were not CSSEDC members. Part I of the survey requested information about the school, its organization and its student population. Part II requested a list of up to ten novels commonly required in the English program in the school. Part III requested a list of up to ten novels commonly identified in that school as among the students' favorites. In this third part it is worth noting the methods suggested in the letter: a count of the frequency of the use of certain novels in book reports, the polling of students and fellow teachers, an examination of school and public library checkout records.

Returns came in regularly from January until May, at which time we began our tabulation and analysis. By then we had received 272 (a 65.6 percent response) usable returns from the CSSEDC group and 36 (a 72 percent response) from the nonmembers. We examined carefully these latter 36 and discovered no appreciable differences between them and the returns of the CSSEDC members. Hence, we combined the returns into one group of 308 responses.

Part I of the survey instrument requested information about the schools from which we received returns. The data about these schools appear in the tables and discussion below.

Figure 1.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
gainesville, florida - 32611

November 28, 1973

Dear CSSEDC member:

The NCTE and CSSEDC Executive Board have graciously permitted our use of their mailing lists to conduct a survey about the reading of novels in the secondary schools. From those lists we randomly selected names to contact and yours was among them. We hope you'll be willing to participate.

The survey is in three parts, all of them on the enclosed sheet:

-Part I requests some information about your school.
-Part II asks for a list of novels, up to ten, which are taught by your English department. Because some schools will teach many more than 10 novels, we should like you to list them somewhat according to the commonality with which they are taught. For example, if Great Expectations is taught to virtually half the ninth graders and Catcher in the Rye to only about one fourth of the eleventh graders, Great Expectations would appear on your list before Catcher. But your ordering of the novels is not of crucial concern; of more importance is your listing of novels that are commonly taught.
-Part III asks you to list novels that the students in your school would select as their favorites. For this task you may wish to use such information as frequency of book reviews on certain novels, student comments about their favorites, (You may even wish to poll some of your classes.), the comments of other teachers about what their students are reading, or the frequency with which certain books are checked out of the library.

There could easily be some overlapping in the two lists. If, for example, Huck Finn is often taught and you think it is among your students' favorites, it would go on both lists. It could easily prove true, though, that the two lists contain completely different titles.

Our intention is to tabulate these two lists and to publish the results in the English Journal. We believe that you'll find it useful to know those novels which are commonly taught and those which are believed to be student favorites, as picked in a fairly extensive survey.

We do hope that you'll help us out and that you'll be able to do so before the holiday vacation. We have provided a stamped, addressed envelope for your convenience. And we do thank you for your cooperation.

Cordially yours,

T. W. Hipple

Ted Hipple
Professor of Education

Faith Schullstrom

Faith Schullstrom
Graduate Teaching Associate

TH/FS:cnc

Figure 2.

CSSEDC Survey on Novels Commonly Taught and Novels Identified as Student Favorites

Part I:

Name _____

State in which school is located _____

Size of school _____

School Organization by grade (check one): ___6-8; ___6-9; ___7-9; ___9-12; ___10-12; ___other

Is an elective program in English operative in your school? _____

Number of years students are required to take English _____

*Approximate percentage of graduates who enroll in college _____

*Approximate ethnic representation in the student body _____white; _____black; _____Spanish-surnamed; _____other (please specify)

*We need this information to assure that our sampling is representative.

Part II:

Please list up to ten commonly taught novels in your school.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Part III:

Please list up to ten novels that are student favorites in your school.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Thank you for your assistance. Please use the enclosed envelope to return to Ted Hipple, Professor of Education, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 32611.

Table 1

Distribution of Returns by States

Alabama	2	Montana	1
Alaska	0	Nebraska	3
Arizona	6	Nevada	0
Arkansas	1	New Hampshire	1
California	24	New Jersey	14
Colorado	4	New Mexico	0
Connecticut	8	New York	14
Delaware	0	North Carolina	4
Florida	24	North Dakota	1
Georgia	5	Ohio	23
Hawaii	0	Oklahoma	2
Idaho	1	Oregon	5
Illinois	22	Pennsylvania	21
Indiana	13	Rhode Island	0
Iowa	19	South Carolina	5
Kansas	1	South Dakota	2
Kentucky	1	Tennessee	4
Louisiana	1	Texas	5
Maine	1	Utah	1
Maryland	8	Vermont	0
Massachusetts	11	Virginia	5
Michigan	17	Washington	4
Minnesota	5	West Virginia	0
Mississippi	2	Wisconsin	11
Missouri	5	Wyoming	1

In addition to being representative of a wide geographic area, our returns came from schools of varying sizes, as Table 2 indicates.

Table 2

Distribution of Returns by School Size

1- 199	11	1500-1999	43
200- 499	26	2000-2499	33
500- 999	89	2500-2999	10
1000-1499	81	over 3000	15

The organization of the responding schools also varied, as reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Distribution of Returns by School Organization

6-8	4	9-12	161
6-9	2	10-12	93
7-9	24	other	24

The question about elective programs in the responding schools proved impossible to report in tabular form, though 241 schools did report a complete or partial elective program for one or more

years of English. Some schools also reported that they were moving into elective programs within a year or two.

On the question about the number of years in which English is required, we encountered similar tabulating difficulty. We can safely say that in almost all cases English is required through the eleventh grade for almost all students. For many seniors, especially college preparatory students, English is either required or "very strongly recommended." Finally, several schools with elective programs reported that "many" of their students elected to take additional English courses over and above the requirements of the school.

Table 4 reports on the percentages of students who enroll in college from the responding schools.

Table 4

Distribution of Returns by Percentage of College-Bound Student

Under 10 percent	17	41 - 60	101
11 - 25	29	61 - 80	53
26 - 40	67	over 80 percent	41

Our final question dealt with the ethnic proportions in the student bodies of the responding schools. These data are reported in Table 5 in

terms of the percentages of white students.

Table 5

Distribution of Returns by Percentage of White Students

95 - 100 percent	29	20 - 39	17
80 - 94	157	5 - 19	7
60 - 79	64	under 5 percent	2
40 - 59	32		

The data in these tables provide us confidence that our returns did represent the ethnic, academic, and geographic diversity we had hoped to achieve when we undertook the study.

Part II of our survey asked for information about the most commonly required novels. These data appear in Table 6, with the frequency (from 308 responses) of their mention.

Table 6

Novels Most Frequently Required

1.	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	(152)
2.	A Separate Peace	(128)
3.	To Kill a Mockingbird	(117)
4.	The Scarlet Letter	(115)
5.	Lord of the Flies	(112)
6.	The Great Gatsby	(95)
7.	The Pearl	(82)
8.	Animal Farm	(71)
9.	The Old Man and the Sea	(70)
10.	The Catcher in the Rye	(68)
11.	Of Mice and Men	(60)
12.	The Red Badge of Courage	(59)
13.	1984	(53)
14.	Brave New World	(51)
15.	The Grapes of Wrath	(49)
16.	The Outsiders	(40)
16.	The Pigman	(40)
18.	Great Expectations	(37)
19.	A Tale of Two Cities	(35)
20.	Ethan Frome	(34)
21.	When the Legends Die	(30)
22.	A Light in the Forest	(27)
22.	Siddhartha	(27)
24.	Cry the Beloved Country	(26)
25.	Fahrenheit 451	(23)
26.	The Stranger	(22)
27.	Bless the Beasts and the Children	(21)
27.	The Return of the Native	(21)
27.	Silas Marner	(21)
30.	A Farewell to Arms	(19)
31.	Shane	(18)
32.	Flowers for Algernon	(17)
32.	The Good Earth	(17)
34.	Moby Dick	(16)
34.	Native Son	(16)
36.	All Quiet on the Western Front	(15)
36.	Slaughterhouse Five	(15)
36.	Wuthering Heights	(15)
39.	Billy Budd	(14)
39.	Jane Eyre	(14)

Part III of our survey requested information about the novels respondents felt to be among the favorites of the students in their schools. These results are reported in Table 7, with the frequency (from 308 responses) of their mention.

Table 7

Novels Most Frequently Identified as Favorites

1.	The Catcher in the Rye (80)	20.	That Was Then, This Is Now (31)
1.	Go Ask Alice (80)	23.	The Godfather (29)
3.	The Outsiders (73)	24.	Gone With the Wind (28)
3.	To Kill a Mockingbird (73)	24.	The Pearl (28)
5.	A Separate Peace (69)	26.	Bless the Beasts and the Children (27)
6.	Jonathan Livingston Seagull (67)	26.	The Hobbitt (27)
7.	Lord of the Flies (64)	26.	Love Story (27)
8.	Of Mice and Men (60)	26.	The Old Man and the Sea (27)
9.	Lisa, Bright and Dark (59)	26.	Slaughterhouse Five (27)
10.	The Exorcist (51)	31.	I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (26)
10.	Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones (51)	32.	Fahrenheit 451 (25)
12.	The Pigman (49)	33.	Brave New World (22)
13.	Animal Farm (47)	34.	Lord of the Rings (21)
14.	Flowers for Algernon (41)	35.	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (20)
15.	Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (37)	36.	Joy in the Morning (19)
15.	Brian's Song (37)	36.	The Scarlet Letter (19)
15.	1984 (37)	38.	Catch-22 (17)
18.	My Darling, My Hamburger (34)	38.	The Chosen (17)
19.	Siddhartha (33)	40.	Johnny Got His Gun (16)
20.	The Grapes of Wrath (31)		
20.	The Great Gatsby (31)		

CHAPTER II

INTERPRETATIONS OF THE RESULTS

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote, "No generalization is worth a damn -- including this one." Still, even Holmes might agree that some generalizations, whatever their worth, are more fruitful than others. In this section we offer some generalizations derived from the data in our survey and some interpretations.

First, it is possible, we think, to generalize from our evidence that the most commonly required novels on our list in Table 6 are, in fact, the novels most commonly required in the secondary school English programs in the United States. The national character of our returns and their distribution among schools of varying size, varying ethnic proportions in student populations, and varying percentages of college-bound students in the student populations suggest that a survey covering every single high school in the country would not yield substantially different results from what we found. Adding a measure to our degree of certainty is the fact that required novels in an English program are easy to know about and to list, especially so for a department chairman who often must approve departmental syllabi, oversee the purchasing of class sets of books, acquaint new teachers with specific courses and curricula. We feel a rather healthy conviction about our assertion that most commonly required novels in the United States, at this point in time (to borrow a phrase made infamous by Watergate), are Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, A Separate Peace, To Kill a Mockingbird,

The Scarlet Letter, and Lord of the Flies.

We feel far less sure of ourselves about the list of favorites. For one thing, we received over 600 titles on this side of the survey, 216 of them mentioned only once. For another, having taught a number of years in high schools, we know how easy it is for a teacher of English to assume that the favorites his class or classes identify are favorites of all the students in the school; they may not be. In our survey we have no way of assessing the means the department chairpersons used in broadening the scope of their inquiry about the favorites in their schools. Despite our guidelines we believe that some chairpersons may simply have used their own judgments, without trying to inform those judgments by sampling the opinions of other teachers, of their own students, of the students of other teachers, or of knowledgeable persons like librarians. Department chairpersons are, after all, busy people. Despite their good intentions some of them may not have had the time to secure the opinions of others. Then, too, there is the ephemeral nature of the "favorites" list. Certainly best sellers like The Exorcist have a legitimate place on the list, but one has to wonder where, if at all, that title will be next year. In a similar vein we feel safe in assessing that the popularity of The Great Gatsby is owing somewhat to the fanfare accompanying the movie version. Finally, too, there is that peculiar phenomenon among adolescents best described as a "local fad." Girls at a particular high school may all wear socks, whereas at another high school in another state such behavior would be the subject of ridicule because of how unusual it is. So it is with books. One or two titles

may sweep through a school population, the happy recipients of strong recommendations from popular students or esteemed teachers who say to all who will listen, "You simply must read this." At another school there may be no such recommendations.

With these demurrers kept well in mind, we still feel that our list of favorites, especially the top ten or so, has both validity and usefulness. Our own analyses of individual returns indicated that this top group received support from all across the country, from large schools and small, from schools with vastly differing ethnic populations and college-bound proportions.

A more penetrating analysis of these data yields many potentially valuable findings. The conclusions discussed below are far from exhaustive; we frankly ask our readers to examine the results and form their own judgments. These few that we have included, however, do, in our opinion, merit special attention.

Conclusions of Survey

(A) From the required lists one can soon note that the "classic" novel is still very often required in the English class. However, the term may need redefinition and updating. Few would debate the accuracy of regarding as classics such novels as Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (#1 on the list of required novels), The Scarlet Letter (#4), The Red Badge of Courage (#12), Great Expectations (#18), A Tale of Two Cities (#19). But there may be some

misgivings over such recent novels as The Great Gatsby (#6), The Pearl (#7), The Old Man and the Sea (#8), and The Catcher in the Rye (#10) simply because they are recent. Yet surely these novels are well on their way to being acclaimed "classics" and one can, therefore, applaud their being taught alongside the traditional classics. Overall, the list of required novels illustrates a strong tendency to novels of relatively recent vintage. Possibly this list will help dispell the notion of the stereotypical English teacher who would not consider teaching anything written in the last eighty years.

(B) This very attention to classics, new and old, in the list of required novels begs the question of the attention paid to adolescent interests in the selection of required novels. Only two novels of the forty mentioned were written specifically for adolescent audiences: The Outsiders and The Pigman (both #16). Comparison with the list of favorites on this point reveals that the latter includes a number of novels written mainly for adolescent audiences: books, in addition to the two mentioned above, like Go Ask Alice (#1), Lisa, Bright and Dark (#9), Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones (#10), My Darling, My Hamburger (#18), etc. It is well worth asking if more of these kinds of novels ought to be required. Said another way, should the English teacher require the reading of novels that students choose as their favorites even if such a requirement suggests the displacement of novels the students might not read if they were not required?

(C) The inattention given to black and other minority-group authors and to novels with minority-group protagonists, when compared with the data

about the ethnic populations of the schools, raises questions about the lack of this kind of literature in the use in the schools of the nation. As mentioned above, in 26 of the schools sampled, blacks outnumbered whites. Yet on the required list only Native Son (#34) is by a black author and features black protagonists.

(D) The predominance of novels by American authors is readily apparent. Eight of the most commonly required novels are by American authors; ten of the first eleven favorites are by American authors. Furthermore, a reading of these novels reveals that many of them treat singularly American themes: the prep school environment of A Separate Peace and The Catcher in the Rye, for one example; the racial tensions that figure importantly in Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and To Kill a Mockingbird. It is an easy inference to suggest that secondary school literature study is centered mainly on American literature. Compare this conclusion with the typical university training most prospective English teachers receive, a training that is dominated in most institutions by the study of English literature.

(E) English teachers can take a deserved pride in the fact that the ten most commonly required novels all appear on the list of favorites and that six of these are among the fifteen most popular novels. One could be cynical, perhaps, and argue that English teachers were ingenuous or self-serving in their joint listing of required and favorite novels, but such a position may be unfair. It is more likely that a required novel, if taught well, does become a student favorite.

(F) Both lists permit a number of thematic groupings. These have powerful pedagogical implications for those teachers who prefer to have several different novels read as part of one unit focusing on a particular subject. For example, those required novels dealing somewhat directly with war include All Quiet on the Western Front, The Red Badge of Courage, A Farewell to Arms, and Slaughterhouse Five. To these could be added such novels from the list of favorites as Catch 22, Gone With the Wind, and Johnny Got His Gun. Using several or even all of these, a teacher could readily individualize instruction by having different students reading different novels.

Although death and its effects loom importantly in the fabric of many novels, a good unit of study on death could be drawn from these novels because of the really significant impact death has on the characters of the novels. Such a unit might include A Separate Peace, The Pigman, Brian's Song, and The Red Badge of Courage.

Perhaps the most predominant theme running through all these novels is the theme of the maturing adolescent, the quest for adulthood. The fact that this theme is, in part, what adolescence is all about may explain the mention of a number of these required and favorite novels. Still, whatever the reason for their inclusion, these novels could provide a field day for a teacher anxious to put together a unit on "growing up." The first five of the list of favorites (The Catcher in the Rye, Go Ask Alice, The Outsiders, To Kill a Mockingbird, and A Separate Peace) all deal centrally with this theme; moreover, they do so in diverse ways and diverse settings.

To such a list could be added Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, Great Expectations, and Lord of the Flies, among others.

A number of thematic pairs or trios of novels offer classroom possibilities. Insanity appears in I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, Lisa, Bright and Dark, and One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest. Alienation is central to both The Stranger and Jonathan Livingston Seagull. Retardation is the raison d'etre of Flowers for Algernon and Of Mice and Men. Political criticism is the theme of 1984, Animal Farm, and Brave New World. White/Indian relationships dominate When the Legends Die and The Light in the Forest, just as black/white attitudes play major roles in Native Son and Cry, The Beloved Country.

We could go on at much greater length about thematic groupings, but so also can the teachers who read these results. It is worth adding, however, that a teacher must exercise care in deciding to put a particular novel into a particular thematic slot. Such pigeonholing must neither overstress one theme nor ignore others. Still, because many teachers and many courses deal primarily with themes and because such teaching permits such extensive individualization of reading, we think these groupings are valid and useful.

(G) The role of women in society has been of much concern to many people in recent years; the study of the role of women in literature is in part a reflection and outgrowth of that societal concern. Unhappily, not many of the required novels feature women protagonists or even women in dominant

roles. Hester Prynne is, of course, the sine qua non of The Scarlet Letter, but both Dimmesdale and Chillingworth are more compelling character portrayals. Scout tells the story of To Kill a Mockingbird, but it is really Jem's story. Daisy is important in The Great Gatsby, Lucy Manette in A Tale of Two Cities, Eppie in Silas Marner, but these still remain male dominated novels. For teachers interested in exploring strong female characterizations the best sources among the required novels may be women like Ma in The Grapes of Wrath, Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native, Zeena and Mattie in Ethan Frome, Catherine in Wuthering Heights, and Jane in Jane Eyre.

Of greater use in such a study may be some of the novels from the list of favorites. Characters like Alice in Go Ask Alice, Lisa in Lisa, Bright and Dark, Jenny in Love Story, Deborah in I Never Promised You a Rose Garden, July in Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, and Scarlet O'Hara in Gone With the Wind all richly repay attention given to them as women. Theirs are developed characterizations, rounded portraits that go well beyond the one dimensional, stereotypical women found in a number of novels.

(H) Especially on the list of favorite novels does the close tie-in with novels and television and the movies appear relevant. Television films of Go Ask Alice, Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, and Brian's Song no doubt provided a healthy stimulation for the reading of these novels or added a new dimension to that reading for those students who discovered the novels before they saw the television adaptations. Movies of The Exorcist, The Godfather, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, Love Story, and Flowers for

Algernon ("Charly") doubtlessly contributed to the popularity of these current favorites, as did such classics of the filmic art as Gone With the Wind, The Grapes of Wrath, and The Old Man and the Sea.

The question of the popularity of novels and their appearance as television or theater films is a chicken/egg one. It also is, or should be, an academic one. The wise course of action for teachers is to worry less about whether the film of A Separate Peace caused students to read the book or whether the book generated attendance at the theater and, instead, to consider more how both the book and the film can be examined in classroom study. Viewing ought not to replace reading any more than reading makes viewing unnecessary. Each of these language experiences merits classroom attention. When book and film can both be studied, all participants -- book, film, students, and the teacher -- may be the richer for the experience.

As we mentioned above, these are but a few of the interpretations possible from a study of the results of the survey. What we hope is that these few will encourage readers to think about the results and attempt to draw inferences that go well beyond ours in their classroom potential. Our study was, in part, fact-finding, an attempt to discover what is. We believe that its more important dimension may reside in what teachers make of the "what is," in their moving from that point to what might be.

CHAPTER III

NOTES ON THE TEACHING OF NOVELS

The concluding chapter of this report focuses on some questions teachers ask about the teaching of novels. These certainly are not all of the questions teachers ask; they may not even be the most important ones. They do, however, occur with noticeable frequency among the experienced teachers in the graduate classes we teach and the workshops we conduct.

For rhetorical purposes we have phrased the questions in the first person singular, the answers in the second person.

Questions Teachers Ask About the Teaching of Novels

1. How shall I select the novels I am going to teach? For many years teachers had no selection problems; some still do not. They taught or teach whatever novel happens to be included in the literature anthology selected by the textbook committee. This schema often meant that students studied Great Expectations in the ninth grade, Silas Marner in the tenth, as these were the two novels most commonly anthologized. Indeed, one could surmise that the relatively high position of these two novels among the required novels suggests that the anthology remains yet today a very common teaching tool.

In an age of paperbacks, of relaxed codes for textbook adoption, of elective courses, the choice has

widened, too much so, perhaps, for some teachers who find themselves living amidst a plethora of riches. The wide range of choices available to them makes their decision at once more difficult and more important.

Certain factors in this decision are well worth spelling out. Your choice of a novel to teach should depend on, among other criteria that could be identified, your liking for the novel, your students' abilities, your students' advice on selection, your purposes in teaching the novel, the strategies you intend to employ in your teaching, and, possibly the first criterion to be met, the availability of the novel. Two of these factors merit such extensive discussion that we have treated them separately: your purposes and your strategies. You should remember, however, that purposes and strategies play major roles in the selection of a novel to teach as well as in the implementation of that teaching. The other factors we treat in the paragraphs which follow.

(We are assuming here the rather common classroom activity in which all students are reading the same novel. We are, of course, quite well aware that some teachers of literature seldom teach novels at all and that others never teach one novel to an entire class, but, instead, have individual students reading different novels. For our purposes, however, it is best to center on the one-novel-to-an-entire-class approach.)

(A) Your liking for the novel is and should be an appropriate element in your decision. Teaching a novel is an extended task, often requiring seven or eight classroom days and sometimes several times

that long. (More about the time you should spend on a novel later.) For you to select a novel you really do not like very much is unwise. Choose one that you like and that you believe you can teach. You should attempt, however, to make a distinction between liking a novel and becoming so attached to the novel that the students don't dare be critical of it for fear of offending you.

(B) Your students' abilities must enter any decision you make about a novel you are going to teach. Browning's dictum that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp" has implications for all of teaching perhaps, but you must tread carefully to insure that the novel is not so far beyond the capacities of your students that they refuse to read it or respond to it. Do remember, however, that your own enthusiasm for a novel, your background in the study of novels, your humanism, your teaching experience and expertise can help offset a mismatch, can bridge the gap between your students' abilities and the difficulty of the novel you select. But only to a point. The Return of the Native remains an inappropriate choice for less able ninth graders.

A key concern for you, then, is your students' reading abilities. A student who reads at a rate of six hundred words per minute can get through Great Expectations in about five or six hours. Simple arithmetic tells you that a student who reads at a rate of sixty words a minute will take fifty or sixty hours to read the same novel -- if, that is, he reads it. He may very well not read it, the sheer weightiness of the volume forestalling even the attempt.

Length, then, is one factor. Readability is another. Various formulas exist to measure readability. These usually examine and chart items like vocabulary and sentence length and, because they ignore the impact of content, are, at best, inexact guides that provide only a rough measure of the difficulty of a novel. But a rough measure is better than none. Using one common readability formula (the Dale-Chall) on The Scarlet Letter we found that, for every passage that measured at either the 9-10 or 11-12 grade levels, there were at least two that measured at college level or beyond. If you have or can secure some estimates of your students' reading abilities and some data on the readability of a novel you are thinking of teaching (The various formulas are described in textbooks on reading and are not difficult to use.), you may avoid a major mismatch between your students and the novel you want them to read.

Beyond the obvious factors of length and readability, you should consider such factors as the concept level of the novel -- how abstract its ideas are; the syntax -- how difficult its words and their arrangement are; the form -- how complex its plot development is; its imagery -- how immediate its symbols are. This list could go on and on, but these few examples suggest areas of inquiry well worth your study in determining a novel to teach.

Finally, you should assess students' interests as part of their ability. What they really want to read, are really interested in, they probably will read. The short stories of Edgar Allan Poe, for example, virtually blow the top off most readability formulas, yet these stories are read avidly by ninth

graders who are interested in the macabre content, in the total suspense and terror. The list of favorites suggests some areas of students' interests and it may be appropriate for you to choose a novel from that list.

(C) Closely related to your assessment of students' interests in selecting a novel is their expression of their own preferences for the novel you select. They may want to study, under your guidance, a novel that they have heard about from their friends, that another class has studied, that their parents have recommended, or that has been made into a television film. These preferences and the reasons for them can be discussed in class. If you can select a novel preferred by many in the class, you enter into its teaching with an important psychological advantage -- the students want to read it. This fact alone may turn a potentially unsuccessful unit into a successful one.

(D) As suggested above, the last criterion for selection to be discussed may have a legitimate claim to be first. It is, in fact, the sine qua non. Can you get the novel you want to teach? We believe that it is a better ordering of things, first, to choose the novel you want to teach and, then, to scurry about getting copies. Some teachers disagree. They make their selections from what is available. Whichever route you go, early on you will have to determine whether the novel you want to teach is or can become available at the time you want to teach it. Typically, this determination requires some advance planning. Rare indeed is the teacher who decides today that he will begin Huck Finn tomorrow, bestirs himself to the textbook room, and there finds quantities of that novel

awaiting his taking them.

You will need to know, for example, the policy your school has on requiring that students purchase novels at a local bookstore. If such a requirement is possible, you will then have to assure the bookstore that it can anticipate an onslaught of students and that it should have the novel in stock. You will need to know about the school's purchasing guidelines for textbooks -- how much you can spend, how much lead time the business office will need, for example. Are you content if students have different editions of the novel? If so, perhaps they can use the local library or borrow from parents or friends. In this latter instance you can help in the securing of copies by checking with your fellow teachers to borrow copies.

These brief suggestions will not answer all of your questions about the selection of a novel to teach, but possibly they will provide some direction.

2. What should be my purpose when I am teaching a novel? Purposes for teaching a novel, like purposes for doing most things, are often many and varied. They range in specificity from the exact ("I want my students to read a novel.") to the global ("I want my students to acquire an appreciation of art.") They may be stated behaviorally ("Given the novel To Kill A Mockingbird, the student will describe in writing three instances of Jem's maturation in such a way that other readers of that novel will agree with all the instances he has stated.") or non-behaviorally ("The students will enjoy To Kill A Mockingbird."). They may be short range ("The students will complete the novel within a week.") or long range ("The students will acquire a lifelong habit of reading novels.).

Given these and other differences, and the limited space we have, we have elected to focus on three purposes you, as teacher, may have in teaching the novel.

(A) If your purpose is to help your students learn about structure of a novel, then your need is both to define that structure and exemplify it in the novel you are teaching. If structure is described as the "form" of a novel, your focus will be on formal elements: the intercalary chapters of The Grapes of Wrath, for one example; the alternating point of view in The Pigman, for another; the flashbacks in The Godfather. Included in form, of course, are matters like word choice (Note the eloquent prose of Cry, The Beloved Country, the dialect of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.), sentence complexity and length (Contrast Hemingway and Faulkner.), uses of description to set a mood or advance a plot (Consider The Return of the Native.).

If structure is defined as the "content" of a novel, then conflicts, concepts, themes, and the like become central in your teaching. A novel whose protagonist struggles within himself, like Henry in The Red Badge of Courage, differs in ways that should be made clear to your students from a novel whose protagonist struggles against external forces, like Kino in The Pearl. Many novels, of course, combine both kinds of struggles: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, for one example; The Scarlet Letter, for another. Concepts like family loyalty may be fruitfully explored in novels as different as To Kill a Mockingbird, The Godfather, and That Was Then; This Is Now, while personal loyalty figures importantly in Brian's Song, Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, and

The Outsiders. Themes abound in novels and should be central in teaching about thematic structure. Note the following examples: alienation (The Stranger, Jonathan Livingston Seagull); youthful love (Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones, My Darling, My Hamburger); death (Love Story, A Separate Peace); insanity (Lisa, Bright and Dark, One Flew Over the Cuckoo Nest); futurism (1984, Brave New World); and war (Johnny Got His Gun, All Quiet on the Western Front).

If structure is viewed as the relationship between form and content, then your teaching may try to relate these. For example, the microcosmic settings like the house in Ethan Frome, the island in Lord of the Flies, the farm in Of Mice and Men figure importantly in the progress of the plot and the development of the characters. The language Holden Caulfield uses in The Catcher in the Rye defines him as clearly as his action. The vantage point of a narrator (an element of the form of a novel) plays a significant role in the content of a novel. Think of Nick Carraway in The Great Gatsby or Gene Forester in A Separate Peace or Ishmael in Moby Dick. It can be useful for students to consider the content of a novel (its plot, actions, themes, concepts, etc.) as if they had been related by someone else, i.e., told from a different point of view. How would Bo Jo Jones talk about his marriage to July? Suppose Jem had retold the events of his young life rather than Scout?

Whatever your definition of structure -- and there are others besides these -- it is a legitimate purpose to focus on structure when teaching the novel. It forces students to return again and again to the novel, to find relationships, to discover nuances, to

consider alternatives. When students are so engaged, they are learning about structure and your purpose is being achieved.

(B) If your purpose is either to begin to develop or to enlarge upon your students' ability to evaluate a novel, then your task is to assist in the refining of evaluative criteria and the applying of those criteria to the novel you are teaching. Many such evaluative criteria can be identified and applied, but these broad ones we discuss below suggest both starting points and future directions:

(1) Clarity as a criterion. Just as there are various levels of clarity in a window pane, from crystal clear to virtually opaque, so also are there various levels of understanding in a novel studied in school. Your teaching task becomes one of helping students make the unclear clearer, the almost clear crystal clear. A student may recognize the struggle between Santiago and the shark in The Old Man and the Sea, but you may need to provide some expert assistance in his understanding the struggle between Ahab and the white whale in Moby Dick. Moreover, a student may be clear on the superficial aspects of a novel, the events of The Grapes of Wrath, for example, but miss completely the complex unfolding of Preacher Casy's philosophy to embrace the other characters.

(2) Entertainment as a criterion. Students will tend to like novels they find entertaining, though what determines its entertainment potential for them may differ from student to

student. Your teaching role becomes one of helping them assess why certain features of a novel are entertaining (Is it the plot? the characters? the language? the setting? some combination of these?) and to enlarge upon the range of elements they find entertaining. This latter objective often requires that you go beneath surface events in the novel. Superficially, students can be delighted by the adventure story qualities of the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, but can they be led to take equal satisfaction in Twain's skillful handling of dialects, his descriptions of the storm on Jackson Island or the Grangerford's living room, his interweaving of innocent river life and corrupt onshore existence?

(3) Knowledge as a criterion. Some students assign value to a novel according to the amount they learn from it that they did not know before. For some, the popularity of historical novels derives, in part, from the reader's acquisition of historical information in a palatable way. The current use of the word "depression" as an economic term may take on new meaning for students who have studied The Grapes of Wrath. Aspects of life in China are revealed in The Good Earth, of South Africa in Cry, The Beloved Country, of the Civil War South in Gone With the Wind, of the future in 1984.

But knowledge, as you know, goes well beyond the acquisition of factual information to include insights of what might be called a "moral-sociological-

philosophical dimension." The moral dilemmas that face characters like Huck Finn, Holden Caulfield, and Billy Pilgram provide illumination for adolescent readers. The impact of society or a particular segment of it is seen vividly by readers of Native Son and Shane. The different drummers that characters march to in Catch-22, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, and Flowers for Algernon may have special meaning for troubled readers among today's youth. An understanding of how death may affect people, both those dying and those surviving, can result from novels as unlike as Love Story and A Separate Peace.

These extra meanings do not leap out at students, however. You may have to assist their acquiring them. When you succeed, their resultant judgments about the novel may be higher and more completely developed than they would be without your guidance.

(4) Personal beliefs as a criterion. Among this brief discussion of the criteria students may employ in evaluating a novel must be some attention to their personal beliefs. For those students for whom abortion is never a solution to an unwanted pregnancy, the marriage in Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones makes that novel a better one than My Darling, My Hamburger, in which abortion is a central and accepted element. The infidelity that figures prominently in The Great Gatsby is so repugnant to some readers that they dislike the novel almost from its beginning.

With this criterion your teaching role is a delicately balanced one. You must refrain from letting your students think that their beliefs are

wrong (even though you feel strongly that they are). Yet you should try to help them understand that others, including the characters in a novel, may subscribe to and act upon differing beliefs. A more mature evaluation of a novel, then, allows for differences in personal beliefs between characters and readers, and between one reader and another reader. To reject categorically a novel because one or more of the characters behave in a manner offensive to the reader is neither good reading nor good evaluation.

(C) If your purpose is to help your students use literature as a means of clarifying their values, then your teaching task becomes one of assuring that your students understand the values expressed in the novel and confront these with the values they affirm on the same or similar issues. This task requires classroom attention to questions of values. Why Huck Finn faces the agony he undergoes with respect to his relationships with Jim and with the slave society they live in is, at bottom, a question of their values -- Huck's, Jim's, and the society's.

Indeed, much of what is called "conflict" in literature is representative of disagreement over values. Sometimes these disagreements are to be found in a single character; Pip, for example, in Great Expectations. Sometimes two opposing characters are, in fact, opposed because of their differences in values; Billy Budd and Claggart, for example, in Billy Budd. Sometimes it is one or more characters against the larger remainder of society; the Joads in The Grapes of Wrath. To focus on these

disagreements can be the real stuff of literature teaching, an exciting time when students try both to discern what the value disagreements are and to discover the foundations of these.

Once your students understand, as best they can, the values cherished by the characters in a novel, it follows almost inevitably that they will square these values with their own. Would they have acted as Sydney Carton did at the end of A Tale of Two Cities? Suppose they had lived at the time of The Scarlet Letter? Would their sympathies have been with Chillingworth? Dimmesdale? Hester Prynne? How do they feel about the mob behavior of the boys in Lord of the Flies or Bless the Beasts and Children? To what extent do they agree or disagree with the racial insights provided by such books as Native Son, To Kill a Mockingbird, or Cry, The Beloved Country?

You perhaps have already noticed the close relationship between this purpose for teaching literature -- values clarification -- and the criterion of personal beliefs in the preceding section. The difference exists in the uses to which these are put. In values clarification you are working to clarify values, with literature as an important teaching tool. In evaluation you are using the criterion of personal beliefs to help students assess a work of literature. As mentioned, your role in dealing with personal beliefs is a delicate one. So also is it in dealing with values. You must avoid being critical of a student's values, no matter how repugnant they are to you. What you hope to achieve is his examination of his values, out of which may come a change in the values.

These three purposes -- one focusing on structure, one on evaluation, and one on values -- are surely not the only purposes available to the teacher of literature. They do provide starting points, however, for the teacher anxious to be able to say why he is doing what he is doing. It is important now to turn to the what.

> 3. Should I have my students read the novel in a piecemeal fashion, discussing the parts as they progress in their reading, or should I request that they read the entire novel before beginning classroom work on it?

As with much of teaching, flexibility may provide your best answer to this question. With some students and some novels a straight-through-it-all-before-discussion approach works best; with other students and novels a few-chapters-a-day strategy is most appropriate.

Each tactic has its advantages and disadvantages, and you should consider these as you make your decision. The wholistic approach permits attention to the entire novel, an attention not circumscribed by the students' having read only through chapter four or page eighty. You can look at what the foreshadowing elements actually do foreshadow or at the unfolding of a theme throughout the novel or at the development of a character. On the other hand your students may have difficulties with the novel that could be lessened with questions they could ask midway through it. And, too, the reading of an entire novel before giving any classroom attention to it is, for many students, a formidable task.

But the chapter-a-day approach is also not without pitfalls. Both teachers and students often feel hamstrung at their inability to question or comment on material beyond that part of the novel so far assigned. Some students will finish the novel early and will want to talk about it. With more humor than the teacher who tells it, we recall her story of her teaching of To Kill a Mockingbird on a "Thirty pages a night basis." On the third day, when most of the class had read only the assigned ninety pages, one eager student blurted out, "There in the end when Boo Radley kills Tom Ewell and Jem breaks his arm, does Atticus really --?" He never finished his question because of the teacher's interrupting him. For some students the damage was already done; they had lost some of their motivation to read the book. A further objection to the piecemeal tactic is that some of those same students who will shy away from reading an entire novel may be equally reluctant to read a piece of it every night.

A middle ground may be your best strategy. Urge your students to have the novel read by Monday so that you can teach it wholistically at that time. But use part of the previous week to motivate the students to read the novel, say, on Wednesday, and let them have Thursday and Friday to begin their reading. In that way all students can perhaps get far enough along to want to finish the novel by Monday.

4. How much classroom time should I allot to the teaching of a novel? Several years ago a teacher in a convention we attended spoke of his "twelve-week plan" for teaching Julius Caesar to students of lower ability. They began reading the

play in September, were into Act II in October, and had the final test just before Christmas. Though he spoke laudatorily of the practice, we and most of the others in his audience shuddered. We thought of the tedium, the inevitable review and repetition, the attendent student dislike for the play (and probably for English as well) that must have accompanied his "Chinese-water-torture" methodology.

This teacher provided what is, in our judgment, a wrong answer to the question of time to be spent on a novel (or a play). In fairness, however, we must report that the correct answer is not, to our knowledge, chiseled in stone anywhere. The best answer may be an indefinite "It depends...". It depends on the complexity of the novel, its length, your students' abilities, the intensity of your classroom focus, the number and kinds of related teaching activities.

It does seem prudent to advise against spending more than two weeks -- three at most -- on any one novel. To spend longer is to risk producing the kinds of apathy and dislike that almost surely resulted from the convention-goer's teaching of Julius Caesar.

5. How should I teach the novel? The most common method, though not necessarily the best one for you or your students, is some sort of teacher-student interaction called "recitation" or "discussion." Typically the teacher asks questions to which the students respond. The "unit" ends with some sort of test that is really only a recitation session in writing.

There is nothing wrong with this technique. Numerous teachers, perhaps you included, have used

it successfully for years and years. If you do use this classroom strategy, you probably ought to choose questions that derive from your purposes in teaching the novel. That is, if you want to teach about the structure of a novel, then questions having to do with structure are appropriate: How is the novel put together? What are its parts? What role does the setting play? What elements in the plot may be compared? contrasted? juxtaposed? How and why does the major character change? If you want to teach your students about evaluating a novel, then questions should focus on evaluation: Do you find the novel entertaining? What do you learn from it? Is it artistic in its development of plot and characters and in its use of language? Does it seem consistent? If your purposes include value clarification, then discussions should focus on values: Why does the major character behave as he does? What makes him tick? What does he believe in? How would you behave in his circumstances? How do you feel about the events and the characters in the novel?

But not all questions will -- or should -- come from you. Students will have questions and these they should be urged to ask. Some of their questions will suggest that they are unclear about basic elements of the plot of the novel. Others will let you know that they need help with symbolism or imagery. Still others will extend the meaning of the novel into the "real" world beyond it. Not all of the student questions will have easy answers or any answers at all, but no matter: The important thing is that students are asking questions about their reading, are looking for answers, are involved in and responding to the novel.

The total class recitation/discussion tactic is but one technique. Small group, student led discussions are another important method of teaching a novel. These can be structured by you or by your students or left completely unstructured. In small groups more students can get "air time," can talk and be listened to. Your circulating among the groups can help keep them on the track and ease them over trouble spots.

Guest speakers help. Imagine the impact a Viet Nam veteran could have on a discussion of courage that derived from the reading of The Red Badge of Courage. What could a sociologist contribute to an understanding of Lord of the Flies? How useful would your class find a psychiatrist's interpretation of Lisa, Bright and Dark or Flowers for Algernon? What would a marriage counselor tell your class about Mr. and Mrs. Bo Jo Jones?

Writing assignments on novels take many forms, but the most common are expository papers that summarize plots, trace character development, or discuss symbols (or do all of these at once). Like discussion questions, essay assignments can derive from purposes. But, equally like discussion questions, they should sometimes go far afield into related literature or into life situations as these are commented on in the novel being studied. It often helps to thrust the student writer into his own writing: "Suppose you had to defend Chillingworth before St. Peter's gate to Heaven. Write your defense." or "Suppose you were Holden Caulfield's sister Phoebe. What advice would you give him?"

Some writing, too, should be free choice:

"Look, students, I want you to write something that in some way relates to this novel. Something that you want to say about it or that occurred to you while you read it. The choice is yours." In this way students can respond in writing on matters important to them and not feel compelled to attend always to what you feel is important.

But not all writing must be essay in form. Students can keep a journal while they read, can compose a poem about the novel, can write an advertisement for it, can prepare a new chapter of the novel. The typical fears that attach to the writing of exposition may be lessened in these forms of writing. A very useful technique is the classroom newspaper, in which some students write news stories about the events, some create editorials, others do headlines ("Life Not a Sleigh Ride, Says Ethan Frome;" "Hester Earns Top Grade;" Joads Drink Wine of Ire.") Different students may choose or be assigned different tasks according to their interests and abilities, and the resultant product -- the newspaper -- can be distributed to all. These newspapers, by the way, can be saved for the next year's group, when you can use them as a motivator.

Tests demand a different kind of writing; they also, however, may condition certain kinds of comprehension techniques among your students. If you come to be known as one who tests on minute details, your students may subsequently read only for these. If you test only for understanding of plot, they may read only for understanding of plot. It perhaps is better both to ask a variety of kinds of questions on your tests and to give students a choice of questions to answer, even on objective tests ----------

("Answer ten of these fifteen multiple choice questions.") Also it helps to let your students make up some of the questions. Not only will this scheme save you work, but also it enables your students to have an additional writing activity and permits you to learn of their reactions and concerns.

These few teaching tips are but a small handful of the many we hope you develop. As in other aspects of life, variety may be the needed spice and, therefore, your choosing among many will stand you in better stead than your relying on one. We hope these provide you the impetus to develop more, so that your choices reflect a wide range of options.

Appendix A

A Sampler of Books and Articles on the Teaching of Adolescent Literature

Burton, Dwight L. Literature Study in the High Schools. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970. Chapters 5, 9-12.

Burton, Dwight L., Kenneth L. Donelson, Bryant Fillion, and Beverly Haley. Teaching English Today. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975. Chapter 6.

Dunning, Stephen and Alan B. Howes. Literature for Adolescents. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975. Chapters 10-13.

Carlsen, G. Robert. Books and the Teen-Age Reader. New York: Bantam Books, 1971.

Hipple, Theodore W. Readings for Teaching English in Secondary Schools. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1973. "The Study of Literature," pp. 141-223.

Hipple, Theodore W. Teaching English in Secondary Schools. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973. Chapters 5-9.

Hook, J. N. The Teaching of High School English. New York: The Ronald Press, 1972. Chapters 5-6.

Loban, Walter, Margaret Ryan and James R. Squire. Teaching Language and Literature. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969. Chapters 10-13.

Rosenblatt, Louise M. Literature as Exploration. New York: Noble and Noble, 1968.

Blow, Barbara L. and Linda Waddle. "A Book Selection Primer." English Journal, 63 (January 1974) 76-79.

English Journal, 63 (February 1974) entire issue.

Hurley, John and Jerry L. Sullivan. "Teaching Literature to Adolescents: Inoculation or Induction?" English Journal, 62 (January 1973) 49-59.

Muller, Al. "Thirty Popular Adolescent Novels: A Content Analysis." English Journal, 63 (September 1974) 97-99.

Nelson, Gayle. "The Double Standard in Adolescent Novels." English Journal, 64 (February 1975) 53-55.

Pollan, Corrine. "What High School Students are Really Reading." English Journal, 62 (April 1973) 573-576.

Stanford, Gene and Barbara Stanford. "Affective Approaches to Literature." English Journal, 62 (January 1973) 64-68.

RESEARCH BULLETINS

The Self and Academic Achievement
-W. W. Purkey
Slow Learner Problem in the Classroom
-M. Cunningham
Theory Into Practice Through Systematic Observation
-R. Ober
The Search for Self: Evaluating Student Self Concepts
-W. W. Purkey
The Nongraded School
-Breivogel and Rogers
Sensitivity Training in Perspective
-B. Ellis
Writing Behavioral Objectives
-H. H. McAshan
School Advisory Committee
- reivogel and Greenwood
Enhancement of the Self-Concept: A Case Study
-Edgar, Guertin, et al
Educational Provision for Emotionally Disabled Children
-Bullock and Brown
The Administrator Looks at Programs for Emotionally Disturbed Children: Guidelines for Planning
-Bullock and Justen
The Learning Centers Approach to Instruction
-George, Kinzer, et al
Case Law and Education of the Handicapped
-Collings and Singletary
Individualization of Instruction - High School Chemistry: A Case Study
-Altieri and Becht
Competencies Needed for Teaching Emotionally Disturbed and Socially Maladjusted Children and Youth: Implications for Staff Development
-Bullock, Kelly, and Dykes
Value Clarification in the Social Studies: Six Formats of the Value Sheet
-Casteel and Stahl
The Florida Professional Practices Council
-Newell and Ingram
Performance Based Teacher Supervision Using Modeling
-Koran and Koran
Ten Years of Open Space Schools: A Review of the Research
-P. George
Annual Report of School Progress: An Analysis and Indication of Alternatives
-Breivogel and Greenwood

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